



## *215TH Brigade Support Battalion*

Distinguished Unit of the Regiment 2007



**“NO TASK TOO TOUGH”**

## VIETNAM ERA



3rd Brigade, 1ST Cavalry Division at Hong Kong Mountain at Anh Khe

Although 26 March 1971, officially marked the end of duties in Vietnam for the majority of the 1st Cavalry Division, President Nixon's program of "Vietnamization" required the continued presence of a strong U.S. fighting force. To serve this function, the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Regiment, 1st Battalion of the 7th Regiment, 2nd Battalion of the 8th Regiment and 1st Battalion of the 12th Regiment along with specialized support units as "F" Troop, 9th Cavalry and Delta Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion and "C" Company, 8th Engineer Battalion helped establish the 3rd Brigade headquarters at Bien Hoa. Its primary

mission was to interdict enemy infiltration and supply routes.

On 30 June 1971, the 215th Composite Service Battalion (Support) was constituted in the Regular Army and assigned to the 3rd Brigade (Special), 1st Cavalry Division and activated in the Republic of Vietnam. Support included, but not limited to administrative services, supply distribution, medical and maintenance support. To provide these services, the battalion was comprised of the following units: Headquarters, Headquarters and Band Support Command, Administrative Company, Supply and Transport Company, Medical Company and Headquarters and Maintenance Support Company.

The 215th Composite Service Battalion demonstrated new concepts, efficiency, and dedication of support to the 3rd Brigade through the use of personnel contact teams, brigade, aviation assets and aerial delivery techniques. The 215th participated in four campaigns, including Counter Offensive Phase VII, Consolidation I and II and Cease Fire. In addition to the support of the brigade, the Medical Company also participated in a significant civil action program involving support missions to the civil population of Vietnam. As a result of the dedication and professionalism of the troopers assigned to the battalion, the unit was awarded the Meritorious Unit Citation and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.



Re-supply to 3 Brigade in Phouc Vinh, South Vietnam

## DEACTIVATION

By 31 March 1972, only 96,000 U.S. troops were involved in the Vietnam combat operations. Less than two months later, the last of the 1st Cavalry Division, the 3rd Brigade along with the 215th Composite Service Battalion, began its "Stand Down" in a phased withdrawal and was brought back to the United States, completing the division recall on 26 June 1972, which had started over a year earlier on 05 May 1971. The 1st Cavalry Division had been the First Army Division to go to Vietnam and the last to leave. On 30 June 1972, the 215th Composite Service Battalion was inactivated at Oakland, California.

## REACTIVATION

On 16 December 1991, the 215th Composite Support Battalion was reactivated as the 215th Support Battalion (FWD) at Fort Hood, Texas bringing the number of active duty forward support battalions to three. The mission of the 215th Forward Support Battalion was to provide logistical support to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

The 215th Forward Support Battalion was organized with three companies.

The Headquarters and Alpha Company consisted of all battalion-level command and staff personnel, all battalion food service personnel, and a support operations section. Additionally, it was the supply and service company in the battalion and provided petroleum supply, ration support and general supply support to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

The Bravo Company was a maintenance company that conducted direct support repairs and services on equipment in the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. The company had the capability of repairing tracked and wheeled equipment, engineer equipment, fire control equipment, and tank turrets. Additionally, the service and recovery section provided metal working support and vehicle recovery support. The company also maintained a repair parts warehouse.

The Charlie Company was a medical company that has the mission of treating, holding, and evacuating patients from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

## TRAINING TO DEPLOY

In January and February 1992, the battalion participated in the Army Field Tests of the Single Channel Ground-Airborne System (SINCGARS). During this test, the "Blacksmiths" established a high standard of excellence, achieving a 98.9 percent diagnosis rate for the tested radios. In December, the battalion went to the National Training Center to support the 3rd Brigade. The "Blacksmith" troopers set records for spare parts supply accountability and helped the brigade achieve the highest turn-in operational readiness rate experienced in over 100 National Training Center rotations.

Within 20 days of returning from the National Training Center, the battalion deployed a Logistic Task Force to Kuwait in support of Task Force 3-41 Infantry during Operation Intrinsic Action, where they provided the full spectrum of combat service support. In January 1993, the battalion returned to Kuwait in support of Task Force 1-9 Cavalry during Operation Iris Gold.

Throughout 1993, the 215th participated in the Army's field-testing of the M1A2 tank, helping to prove the viability of new diagnostic test sets for the hull and turret electronic components, as well as proving the suitability for the overall maintainability of the tank.

In July 1993 and in October 1994, the 215th again deployed to the National Training Center, at Fort Irwin, California in support of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. In December 1995, upon returning from the National Training Center, the battalion deployed logistic elements to Panama to provide the 8th Engineer Battalion with medical and maintenance support following the riots at the Cuban refugee camps.

## FORCE XXI CONVERSION

Based on data gathered during a series of advanced war fighting experiments at Fort Hood, Texas and Fort Irwin, California from 1994-97, the Army announced in June 1998 that it would adopt a new division design. The new heavy division would have some 3,000 fewer soldiers and would field one armored and two mechanized infantry brigades, each with three battalions.

In June 2003, the 215th Forward Support Battalion was reorganized with six companies Alpha Forward Support Company, Bravo Forward Support Company, Charlie Forward



Support Company, Delta Brigade Support Company, Echo Forward Support Medical Company, and a Headquarters Distribution Company as a part of the Force XXI conversion.

The Headquarters Distribution Company (HDC) consisted of all battalion-level command and staff personnel. HDC provides food service to the three base companies (HDC, D BSC, and E FSMC), battalion communications support, and a support operations section. Additionally it is the supply and service company in the battalion, and provides petroleum supply, ration support, transportation, maintenance parts support, and general supply to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

The Alpha Forward Support Company was a multifunctional unit that provided transportation, field maintenance, and all classes of supply for the 1-9 Cavalry. It executed the CSS plan in the maneuver area of Task Force 1-9 Cav.

The Bravo Forward Support Company was a multifunctional unit that provided transportation, field maintenance, and all classes of supply for the 2-7 Cavalry. It executed the CSS plan in the maneuver area of Task Force 2-7 Cav.

The Charlie Forward Support Company was a multifunctional unit that provided transportation, field maintenance, and all classes of supply for the 3-8 Cavalry. It executed the CSS plan in the maneuver area of Task Force 3-8 Cav.

The Delta Brigade Support Company was a direct support maintenance company in support of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team (Greywolf). The BSC 1st and 2nd base platoons provided organizational and direct support maintenance support to HDC 215th FSB, D BSC 215th FSB, E FSMC 215th FSB, 3rd Brigade Reconnaissance Troop and HHC 3d BDE. The D BSC provided base shop support to 3 BCT in the Armament shop, ground support equipment, missile, and ELM shops. The BSC Engineer Support Platoon was a multifunctional unit that provided transportation, field maintenance, and all classes of supply for the 8th Engineer Battalion.

The Echo Forward Support Medical Company was a medical company that has the mission of treating, holding, and evacuating patients within the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. E FSMC was composed of organic medical platoons that provide triage, management of mass casualties, and advanced trauma management. Some other areas of care given are initial resuscitation and stabilization, and care for patients with combat and peacetime injuries. E FSMC provided interventions for combat and operational stress disorders to include battle fatigue, and preparation of medical patients for further evacuations.

## OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM II

In March 2004, the Blacksmiths deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team as part of Task Force Baghdad. The battalion provided the "life blood" of the 3d Brigade Combat Team; food, fuel, maintenance, transportation and repair parts. The 3d Brigade could not accomplish its mission if our soldiers did not first accomplish theirs.



Soldiers of 215th FSB staged for a re-supply mission

Throughout the duration of operations, 215th FSB provided critical combat service support to the 3BCT. The battalion provided responsive support to all of the 3BCT critical combat and stability and support missions. The 215th FSB surged assets in support of combat operations in Baghdad, An Najaf, and Fallujah. During combat operations in Baghdad, the battalion provided medical treatment and evacuation support to tactical operations on Haifa Street. The battalion provided

back up general support to units conducting combat operations in An Anjaf and Fallujah, providing critical re-supply in repair parts, ammunition, and special tools required to sustain combat operations.

The 215th FSB's ability to support 6,500 Soldiers, and multiple government and non-governmental organizations operating in the International Zone was first-rate. The support consisted of millions of dollars worth of Class I through V, including over 4.2 million bottles of water, 1.2 million dining facility supported meals, 500,000 MREs, and 4.1 million gallons of fuel. Additionally, 215th FSB received 240,000 requisitions and processed over 180,000 receipts of Class II, IV, and IX. The battalion processed over 2,400 receipts per day at peak rate. This was double the normal processing rate. During the conduct of this support, the battalion completed over 420 combat support missions throughout Baghdad and Central Iraq. Over 90% of these missions were self-secured convoys along the most hazardous routes in the AOR. The 215th FSB never failed to complete its logistics re-supply and support mission. The unit's vigilance toward eliminating complacency and ruthless enforcement of standards resulted in no incidents where innocent civilians were injured, no vehicular accidents, no loss of life, or serious injury from combat.



215th Soldier preparing a CL V push during OIF II

The maintenance support provided to 3BCT was truly outstanding. The 215th FSB played a key role in maintaining the BCT's OR rate at 97% for M1A2 SEP, M2A2/A3,

and M1114 systems collectively during continuous operations, the best in the 1st Cavalry Division. The 215th FSB completed over 3,100 direct support maintenance jobs while simultaneously installing 284 AOA windshields and 284 Red Dot air conditioners in record time, ensuring that 3BCT was the first in the division to complete this force protection and life saving requirement. Additionally, the battalion completed over 50 recovery missions, seven of which were well out of the 3BCT's sector. Each time the battalion was able to rapidly respond to assist other brigades, which reduced the time that US Soldiers were exposed in hostile areas.



215th FSB conducting a Combat Logistics Patrol in Fallujah



CL IV re-supply mission

The 215th FSB provided enhanced medical support directly to 3BCT units as well as back up support to other organizations occupying the International Zone. The unit provided medical capability (MEDCAP) augmentation to the 31st Combat Support Hospital (CSH), often providing overflow patient hold and treatment when casualties exceeded the hospitals capabilities. On several occasions, high value enemy prisoners of war were held, guarded, and treated, ensuring that the enemy patients were medically stabilized. The end result was a high value POW available for intelligence questioning to facilitate actionable intelligence of other Anti-Iraqi Forces. The battalion participated in four MEDCAP missions to provide medical care to over 1390 local Iraqi civilians. During these missions, the 215th FSB provided much-needed general medical care, dental and optical care, as well as immunizations to improve the health in the local populace and build good will. The battalion established the theater's only dedicated dermatology clinic staffed with a clinical specialist. The clinic was capable of diagnosis and treatment of all dermatological conditions to include providing the only Leshmaniasis treatment available in the Kuwait and Iraq AOR. This service resulted in over 800 patients returned to duty and the retention of combat power.

Throughout the deployment, 215<sup>th</sup> FSB continued to meet the high demands around the AO, proving themselves as the "life blood" of the 3d Brigade Combat Team. In March 2005, 215<sup>th</sup> FSB re-deployed to Fort Hood, TX.



HDC, 215TH fueling a M969A for a bulk fuel mission

## MODULAR FORCE

The Army restructured to a more modular, capabilities-based force to better meet the requirements of combatant commanders. On May 24, 2005, following six months of extensive planning, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division began executing the monumental task of reorganizing and realigning its manpower and equipment resources into the Army Matrix of Modular Forces.

As part of the Army's transformation towards a modular force, the 215th FSB stood down from the DISCOM on July 15, 2005 and was re-designated as the 215th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

Headquarters Distribution Company was split to form a Headquarters Company and a Distribution Company and another Forward Support Company was added to support the Brigade's Artillery Battalion. The battalion ended up comprised of eight companies and was assigned directly under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heavy Brigade Combat Team (Grey wolf).

Prior to the deployment of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08, the Blacksmiths could foresee the dire need for one more addition. Thus, the battalion created a new detachment called the Reconnaissance and Security Detachment (RSD). It was formed to provide the Combat Logistics Patrols (CLPs) with the additional security forces it needed. RSD was comprised of personnel from the entire battalion and its sole purpose was geared toward the security of the CLPs during combat operations.

## OIF MEMORIAL DINING FACILITY

In honor of the Fallen Soldiers lost during OIF II, the brigade's dining facility was named Operation Iraqi Freedom Memorial Dining Facility. The Dining Facility's most notable monument is the "Wall of the Fallen," which displays a photo of each First Cavalry Division Soldier that made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.

The battalion's 92G Soldiers and leaders were directly responsible for the OIF II Memorial DFAC winning the following awards:

Division Phillip A. Connelly Competition winner  
III Corps and Fort Hood Phillip A. Connelly winner



The DCG(S) BG Brooks presents the winning trophy to 215th for SW Region Connelly.



Southwest Region Phillip A. Connelly winner  
Fort Hood DFAC Education Award  
Fort Hood DFAC Nutrition Award  
Competed in the Department of the Army Level Phillip A. Connelly competition

215<sup>th</sup> Cooks won the Division and Corps Cook and NCO (Cook) of the year awards.

Hosted the following dignitaries:  
The Judge Advocate General of the Army  
Sergeant Major of the Army  
Multiple Congressmen  
Commander of Army Material Command  
Army G6



SGM of the Army, SGM Preston visits with 215<sup>th</sup> cooks at OIF Memorial DFAC

## JOINT READINESS TRAINING CENTER

During MAY 2006, the battalion proved its excellence in the deployment to the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC). 215<sup>th</sup> had the honor of being first in the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division to field SAMS-E and deploy it with CSS-VSAT. Other firsts for the battalion included conducting BDE Maintenance and FSC Log Synchronization meetings via Command Post of the Future (CPOF). The Combat Service Support Observer Control team was impressed with the capability and collaboration that CPOF afforded key logistical operators across the battlefield. Additionally, the integration of enablers such as MTS and FBCB2 were invaluable in the C2 and tracking of our many Combat Logistics Patrols (CLPs). These powerful systems provided 215<sup>th</sup> one more method of communicating with forces throughout the BCT battle space, when FM/LOS systems could not.

## WAR FIGHTER EXERCISE

Immediately following JRTC rotation 06-07, the Blacksmith BN was called to support again. In June 2006, U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) conducted a mission rehearsal exercise (MRX) to help prepare the 21,000 U.S. service members scheduled for rotational deployment to Iraq train for their upcoming mission. The MRX entitled Unified Endeavor 06-2 was conducted by U.S. Army III Corps, 25th Infantry Division, and 1st Cavalry Division at Ft Hood and Schofield Barracks. The 215<sup>th</sup> BSB provided Soldiers to the Battle Simulation Center that provided the chain of command with

tactical information as well computer data entry. Exercise Unified Endeavor 06-2 (UE 06-2) provided realistic training scenarios for U.S. Army III Corps' command staff, as well as elements of the 25th Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions, and individual augmentees assigned as part of Multinational Corps-Iraq with the necessary maneuver to provide CSS to the Division.

## OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM 06-08

In October of 2006, 215<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08 in support of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heavy Brigade Combat Team, which was attached to the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The battalion assumed duties in FOB Warhorse, Diyala Province, from the 64<sup>th</sup> Brigade Support Battalion under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Upon completion of RIP, the battalion assumed FOB mayoral and Force Protection responsibilities for a two thousand Soldier FOB. The Force Protection mission is comprised of command and control of FOB perimeter, entry control point, and quick reaction force operations that are manned daily by 174 multinational Soldiers.



ADC 215TH Soldiers refuel two AH-64 at the Blacksmith FARP OIF 06-08

The 215<sup>th</sup> BSB has provided support for five major kinetic and two non-kinetic brigade operations, which have greatly increased the security of the provincial population and increased the influence of the Iraqi government. While deployed the battalion has used internal resources to secure and conduct over 130 Combat Logistics Patrols to date totaling over 85,000 miles in support of three Forward Operations Bases and five outlying

locations used to train Iraqi Army and Police personnel. The battalion has provided combat lifesaver and maintenance training to Iraqi Police and Army forces in addition to conducting numerous fabrications and repair to Iraqi vehicles and weapon systems.

The Blacksmiths also conducts a wide array of daily direct support operations for the 3<sup>rd</sup> HBCT. The battalion manages the brigade Ammunition Transfer and Holding Point, SSA, bulk fuel issue and storage, and direct support transportation assets which are all 24 hour operations. The battalion Forward Arming and Re-fueling Point has currently re-fueled over 1600 aircraft and conducts 24-hour operations. The battalion medical company provides the only Level II medical care in the brigade area of operations, providing daily



Soldiers prepare ammunition for retro-grade as apart of total recall



Iraqi Police refuel at the Blacksmith retail point

medical treatment for multiple traumas to US, coalition forces, and local national personnel. The medical company also provides support for severe traumas and MASCAL support operations. The maintenance company provides direct support recovery, automotive, electronic maintenance, and armament to the brigade and coalition forces.



MG Mixon, CG of 25th ID talks to Blacksmith Soldiers during a post Combat Logistic Patrol debrief.

## “NO TASK TOO TOUGH

The "Blacksmiths" of the 215th Brigade Support Battalion continues to serve the nation proudly. From activation to the current date, they have proved themselves to be nothing less than a stellar unit. Whether they are called to deploy or setting standards in garrison, they continue to live up to the battalion's motto "No Task Too Tough!"

## CREST

Motto: ***“No Task Too Tough”***

Crest:



The design of the battalion insignia centers on a gold metal and enamel device 1 1/8 inches in height overall, consisting of a shield blazoned: The black color is symbolic of iron, alluring to the organizational transition from blacksmiths in the days of the horse cavalry to maintenance teams in support of heavy armor. The red background pays homage to Artillery origins of the command supported. The yellow stripe, in heraldry termed a “Sable Bend”, signifies the rich Cavalry traditions, the four branch insignias of Or, a chevron gules (red) charged with tow lightening flashes conjoined chevron-wise or; in base a blacksmith’s hammer and tongs saltirewise surmounted by an anvil, all proper. Attached below the shield a black scroll inscribed “NO TASK TOO TOUGH” in gold letters.

Gold/buff and scarlet are the colors traditionally associated with Support units. The chevron symbolizes the battalion's mission of forward support. The unit's nickname, “Blacksmiths,” is recalled by the anvil and blacksmith's tools. Black represents dependability and solidarity.



## **LINAGE**

On 30 June 1971, the 215th Composite Service Battalion (Support) was constituted in the Regular Army and assigned to the 3rd Brigade (Special), 1st Cavalry Division

30 June 1972, the 215th Composite Service Battalion was inactivated at Oakland, California

On 16 December 1991, the 215th Composite Support Battalion was reactivated as the 215th Support Battalion (FWD) at Fort Hood, Texas

On July 15, 2005, the 215th FSB was redesignated as the 215th Brigade Support Battalion

## **CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT**

### **Vietnam**

Counter Offensive Phase VII  
Consolidation I  
Consolidation II  
Cease Fire

### **Operation Iraqi Freedom**

Operation Iraqi Freedom II  
Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08

## **DECORATIONS**

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1971

Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm, Streamer embroidered VIETNAM 1971-1972